

## The Permanent Deacon

**The Permanent Diaconate** has been a restored Office of the Church since 1968. **Permanent Deacons** in the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese receive a minimum of 5 years of academic education and diaconal formation. Some have advanced degrees such as a Master of Arts in Theology or other Ecclesial Discipline.

A **Deacon** is an ordained minister of the Catholic Church. There are three groups, or Orders of ordained ministers in the Church: Bishops, Priests (presbyters) and Deacons.

**Deacons** are ordained as a sacramental sign to the Church **and** to the word of Christ, who came “*to serve and not be served.*” The entire Church is called by Christ to serve, and the **Deacon**, in virtue of his sacramental ordination and through his various ministries, is to be a **servant in a servant-Church**.

The various ministries of the Deacon are:

### **As ministers of the Word, Deacons:**

- Carry the Book of Gospels
- Proclaim the Gospel
- Guide the faithful people by giving them instruction
- Announce the intentions of the Universal Prayer
- Preach and teach in the name of the Church
- Provide spiritual direction and counsel (if properly trained)

### **As ministers of Sacrament and Prayer, Deacons:**

- Baptize
- Witness marriages
- Function as ORDINARY ministers of the Eucharist
- Assist Priests and Bishops at Mass
- Lead the faithful in prayer and Eucharistic Devotion
- Assist with Christian Burial by conducting Vigils, Services without a Mass and Committals
- Other functions at special liturgies as noted in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*

### **As ministers of Charity, Deacons:**

- Are leaders in identifying the needs of others, then organizing the Church's resources to meet those needs

**Deacons, priests, and bishops are considered clerics, members of the clergy, in the Catholic Church.** Just as a Priest is normally addressed as “Father”, the **Deacon** is addressed as “Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ (first or last name as the Deacon prefers).”

### **The Attire of the Permanent Deacon:**

Although very similar, the vestments of the **Deacon** and those of the Priest are different. Both wear a white alb. However, the colored stole of the **Deacon** is worn diagonally while that of the Priest is worn vertically. The outer garment of the **Deacon** is a dalmatic and it has sleeves. That of the Priest is called a chasuble and does not have sleeves.

In the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese, the proper formal non-liturgical attire of the **Deacon** is normally a tie and jacket. Sometimes the **Deacon** wears a lapel pin, which is a cross with a diagonal stole on top of it. This is the symbol of the office of the **Permanent Diaconate**.

